THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As regards Air India Limited, the recommendation of the Divinvestment Commission is under consideration of the Government. In respect of Indian Airlines Limited, it is proposed to undertake a phased disinvestment in Indian Airlines over three years, bringing the Government's equity holding down to 49%. As per the existing domestic air transport policy, foreign investment is allowed upto 40%. However, foreign airlines cannot invest in the domestic sector.

Financial Position of Airports

6. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to privatise five airports in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to ensure the financial viability of the remaining airports?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR)I: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) It has been decided to corporatise airports at Delhi, Mumbai, Chenai, Calcutta and the new airport to be constructed at Bangalore. Airports Authority of India (AAI) is in the process of selecting financial and legal consultants to advise on the modalities of corporatisation of these airports along with other related issues including the financial viability of the remaining airports consequent upon the corporatization of airports as mentioned above.

Losses suffered by Air India

7. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India continues to incur additional losses during the last three months;

(b) the total loss suffered during the year so far; and

(c) the main reasons to which the losses are attributable and the steps taken/to be taken by the airline to come out of the red?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per the provisional results of April-December, 1998, Air India has incurred loss of Rs. 199.76 crores as against projected loss of Rs. 265.26 crores for the period April-December, 98.

(c) The losses are due to increase in expenditure on account of interest and depreciation on new aircraft, reduction in yield due to increased competition and cost of operations, increase in wage bill and other staff costs and landing, handling and navigational charges, depreciation of rupee value, etc.

Air India Limited has taken the following steps to improve the performance:—

(i) Marketing efforts have been stepped upto generate additional revenue.

(ii) Network rationalization and consolidation with emphasis placed on route profitability.

(iii) Reduction in expenditure on outside repairs of aircraft by undertaking more in-house repairs.

(iv) Several posts of India based officers abroad have been abolished.

Upgradation of Lucknow Airport

8. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to upgrade the Lucknow Airport as an international airport; and

(b) whether Government expect that there will be enough traffic from Lucknow to foreign countries; if so, the details threof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Lucknow Airport has been developed to handle limited international operations.

(b) Indian Airlines has commenced direct flights from Lucknow to Sharjah with effect from 3rd February, 1999. It is estimated that India Airlines will on an average carry about

70 passengers per flight initially which would increase over a period of time.

इंडियन एयरलाइंस और एयर इंडिया के अधिकारियों की सेवावधि को बढ़ाया जाना

9. **श्री चुन्नी लाल चौधरी:** क्या नागर विमानन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि इंडियन एयरलाइंस और एयर इंडिया के अधिकारियों की सेवानिवृत्ति के बाद उनकी सेवावधि को किन-किन नियमों और किस आधार पर बढ़ाया जाता है?

नागर विमानन मंत्री (श्री अनंत कुमार): इंडियन एअरलाइंस के मामले में सेवानिवृत्ति यानी 60 वर्ष की आयु के बाद सेवा काल और बढ़ाने का कोई प्रावधान नहीं है। जहां तक एअर इंडिया का संबंध है, यह प्रावधान उन नियमों के अधीन अस्तित्व में आता है जिसके अनुसार प्रबंध निदेशक विर्दिष्ट समयावधि तक सेवाकाल में वृद्धि कर सकता है।

Expansion of runway at Calcutta

10. SHRI K. M. SAIFULLAH:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of international flights handled every day; and

(b) the step taken to expand runway at Calcutta to augment tourist flow to Darjeeling?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) During the year 1998 a daily average of 271 International flights were handled by AAI. The number of overflying International flights stood at 617.

(b) There is no proposal to extend the runway at Calcutta Airport. The present runway caters for landing/take off of all type of aircraft including B-747.

Revision of age limit for Senior Citizen Concession on IA

11. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(9) whether Government have brought down the age limit from 65 to 60 years for senior citizens for concessional air fare on Indian Airlines; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Introduction of turboprop aircraft in North-Eastern Region

12. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce short haul turboprop aircraft for flights to different airports in the north-east;

(b) the aircraft which has been selected for the purpose;

(c) whether the airports in the region would be upgraded for the new services; and

(d) if so, whether modern facilities like instrument landing would be provided on these airports?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Operators are free to operate to any station depending upon their commercial judgement subject to route dispersal guidelines.

(b) No final decision has been taken in this regard for the type of aircraft to be acquired.

(c) A Task Force to examine and make recommendations for improving airport infrastructure and for better air links in the North Eastern region has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Civil Aviation). The airports at Agartala, Dibrugarh and Imphal are suitable for Airbus-320, Dimapur, Jorhat, Silchar, Tezpur and Lengpui are suitable for Boeing-737 and Guwahati Airport is suitable for operations of Airbus 300. The airports at Kamalpur and Tezu are suitable for operation of 50 seater type of aircraft. The upgradation of airport is done after taking into account all the relevant factors including traffic projections.

(d) The Airports at Guwahati, Agartala, Imphal and Dibrugarh are equipped with Instrument Landing System.

व्यापक विमानन नीति

13. **श्री गोपाल सिंह जी० सोलंकी:** क्या नागर विमानन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि: